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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR EVANS PRESENTS COPIES OF HIS LETTERS OF CREDENCE TO FM OSKANIAN

Classified By: Ambassador John M. Evans for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

11. (SBU) Ambassador Evans presented copies of his letters of credence to Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian August 23. The Ambassador highlighted the strong U.S.-Armenia bilateral relationship, outlined U.S. policy objectives, and noted that new opportunities may exist in the South Caucasus and the broader region. Oskanian agreed that the U.S.-Armenia relationship was strong, and suggested that he and the Ambassador immediately move to a first-name basis -- a suggestion that Ambassador Evans welcomed. End Summary.

"DIPLOMACY IS A GAME OF INCHES"

12. (C) In a brief introductory call on August 23, Ambassador Evans met with Foreign Minister Oskanian to present copies of his letters of credence. Formal presentation of credentials is expected to take place in early September, when President Kocharian returns to Armenia.

13. (C) Quoting Deputy Secretary Armitage's comment that "diplomacy is a game of inches," Ambassador Evans noted that he wanted to build on the already strong relationship and to further the USG's main goals of promoting regional stability and security, promoting prosperity, and developing democratic institutions. We have some very significant opportunities, Ambassador Evans continued. Within our bilateral relationship we already have established strong ties through our assistance, we have new prospects for increasing defense cooperation and for additional opportunities through the Millennium Challenge Account. Ambassador Evans also discussed the USG sense that there may be some new opportunities for change in the South Caucasus, including new partners with whom to work in Georgia, and we want to see the entire region prosper. Finally, Ambassador Evans commented, we have new winds blowing in the Middle East. He welcomed the Armenian contribution to the Coalition efforts in Iraq.

"FEEL FREE TO CALL ME ANYTIME"

14. (C) Urging Ambassador Evans to feel free to call him directly anytime, even at home, the Minister urged the Ambassador to move to a first-name basis. Oskanian agreed that, "The goals you've outlined are the ones we want: stability, peace and prosperity." He continued that while a great deal had been done, the most difficult tasks were still ahead. On democracy, Oskanian noted, "We've barely scratched the surface." Since 1994 the region has enjoyed the benefits of a cease-fire, but now both sides need to work to make a "real peace." Oskanian noted that he'll be meeting with Azerbaijan's FM in Prague at the end of August and that Presidents Kocharian and Aliyev will meet in Astana in September. Oskanian will continue his talks with Turkish FM Gul, and expressed appreciation for U.S. efforts to date to urge Turkey to normalize its relationship with Armenia. Oskanian emphasized Armenia's desire to see Turkey de-link the closed border from a solution to N-K, Ambassador Evans noted that we needed to encourage everyone to think in broader terms.

A WARM START

15. (C) Foreign Minister Oskanian changed his travel plans in order to be able to receive Ambassador Evans on his first working day in Yerevan -- a strong signal that he and the Armenian government continue to place a high premium on good relations with the U.S. and on cordial personal relations between the Foreign Minister and the U.S. Ambassador. EVANS